

147 Delphic Maxims

1 ἔπου θεῷ

Follow Zeus; follow divinity

2 νόμῳ πείθου

Obey law; obey custom

3 θεοὺς σέβου

Honor the gods; revere the gods

4 γονεῖς αἰδοῦ

1

Respect parents

5 ἡττῷ ὑπὸ δικαίου

Yield to a just man

6 γνῶθι μαθών

When you have learned something, recognize it (in all situations)

7 ἀκούσας νόει

Having heard, perceive

8 σαυτὸν ἴσθι

Know yourself

9 γαμεῖν μέλλε

Intend to marry

10 καιρὸν γνῶθι

Know the critical moment

11 φρόνει θνητά

Think like a mortal; be prudent like one who can die

2

12 ξένος ὡν ἴσθι

Be aware (of yourself) when you are a stranger

13 Ἐστίαν τίμα

Honor / revere the hearth / the family / the altar / the Goddess Hestia

14 ἀρχε σεαυτοῦ

Rule / govern / control yourself

15 φίλοις βοήθει

Come to the aid of those dear to you

16 θυμοῦ κράτει

Rule / conquer / master / control / prevail over anger / desire / emotion / lust

17 φρόνησιν ἀσκει

Practice good sense

18 πρόνοιαν τίμα

Value divine forethought

19 δοχῶ μὴ χρῶ

Do not make use of an oath

3

20 φιλίαν ἀγάπα

Desire / prize / prefer love / friendship

21 παιδείας ἀντέχου

Hold on to / cling to education / learning / culture / custom / what you have been taught

22 δόξαν διώκε

Pursue / seek a good reputation

23 σοφίαν ζήλου

Seek skill

24 καλὸν εὖ λέγε

Acknowledge a good man or a good/beautiful thing

25 ψέγε μηδένα

Blame / censure / find fault with no one

26 ἐπαίνει ἀρετὴν

Approve / commend / praise excellence (merit / good service / virtue)

27 πρᾶττε δίκαια

Act justly / righteously; Manage affairs according to law / custom; Achieve / do in a well-ordered way; Do well-ordered / just things

4

28 φίλοις εὐνόει

Be favourable / well-inclined to friends / family / dear ones / allies / kin

29 ἐχθροὺς ἀμύνου

Keep off from hateful people; keep away from those who alienated and refuse to be reconciled

30 εὐγήνειαν ἄσκει

Practice / train nobility of mind / character / excellence (of body)

31 κακίας ἀπέχου

Keep yourself away from moral badness / cowardice / ill-repute

32 κοινὸς γίνου

Become / be impartial / neutral / courteous

33 ἴδια φύλαττε

Watch / guard / maintain one's own property / affairs / interests

5

34 ἄλλοτριων ἀπέχου

Refrain / hold yourself from what belongs to others / those who are unfavourable / strange things or customs

35 ἀκουε πάντα

Listen to everyone; Listen wholly / entirely

36 εὐφημος ἵσθι

Be fair-sounding; speak auspiciously (in religious settings)

37 φιλω χαροῖζου

Be agreeable to/show kindness to one's own/dear one

38 μηδὲν ἄγαν

Nothing very much / too much

39 χρόνου φείδου

Use time sparingly; Don't waste time

40 ὅρα τὸ μέλλον

Think ahead; Give heed to the things to come

41 ὕβριν μίσει

Hate wanton violence / overblown pride

6

42 ἵκετας αἰδοῦ

Have respect for suppliants

43 πᾶσιν ἀρμόζου

Adapt yourself to all things

44 υἱὸνς παιδευε

Train / discipline your sons

45 ἔχων χαρίζου

When you have, give freely / do a favor

46 δόλον φοβοῦ

Be wary about / flee from a trap / trick / spy

47 εὐλόγει πάντας

Speak well of everyone

48 φιλόσοφος γίνου

Become/ always be becoming a philosopher

49 ὁσια κρίνε

Distinguish what is lawful / divine / sacred / allowed (not forbidden)

7

50 γνοῦς πρᾶττε

When you know, do; having understood by observing, do

51 φόνου ἀπέχου

Hold yourself off from / abstain from murder; avoid punishment by death

52 εὐχου δυνατά

Say aloud things that are powerful / possible / practicable

53 σοφοῖς χρῶ

Have need of / use learned / prudent / practical men (men who know how)/ the wise

54 ἥθος δοκίμαζε

Put behavior to public scrutiny (especially things you have done)

55 λαβὼν ἀπόδος

When you have received / gotten, pay back

56 ὑφορῶ μηδένα

8

View no one with jealousy; view no one stealthily

57 τέχνῃ χρῶ

Make use of the skill that you have; acquire skill

58 ὅ μέλλεις, δός

That which you were on the point of [giving], give (when you said you would)

59 εὐεργεσίας τίμα

On-goingly value / honor good service done, especially since all goodness comes from the Gods

60 φθόνει μηδενί

Bear a grudge against no one

61 φυλακῇ πρόσεχε

Pay attention to watching (for dangers)

62 ἐλπίδα αἴνει

Praise expectation; be content with hope

63 διαβολὴν μίσει

Hate slander / quarreling

64 δικαιώς κτῶ

Acquire justly

65 ἀγαθοὺς τίμα

Honor good men

66 ξριτὴν γνῶθι

Know who is judging

67 γάμους κράτει

Get the upper hand with respect to marriage negotiations

68 τύχην νόμιζε

Acknowledge fate

69 ἐγγύην φεῦγε

Avoid pledges

70 ἀπλῶς διαλέγου

Speak plainly; “don’t speak with forked tongue”

71 ὅμοιοις χρῶ

Deal with those who those are equal and like to you in
virtue

10

72 δαπανῶν ἄρχου

Govern your expenditures

73 κτώμενος ἥδου

What you have acquired, enjoy

74 αἰσχύνην σέβου

Revere shame (that has a person admitting his wrong-doing)

75 χάριν ἐκτέλει

Fully repay favor (especially to the Gods)

76 εὐτυχίαν εύχου

Pray (aloud) for success

77 τύχην στέργε

Be content with your lot

78 ἀκούων ὅρα

Having heard, discern / give heed

79 ἐργάζου κτητά

On-goingly work for acquisitions

11

80 ἔριν μίσει

Despise strife / quarreling

81 ὄνειδος ἔχθαιρε

Detest disgrace (yours); don't reproach others

82 γλῶτταν ἴσχε

Hold your tongue

83 ὕβριν ἀμύνου

Ward off insolence (or lust) toward others and avoid attracting it from others

84 κρίνε δίκαια

Discern just things (from unjust things); discern justly

85 χρῶ χρήμασιν

Use your useful things (don't hoard them)

86 ἀδωροδόκητος δίκαζε

Make judgements without bribes

87 αἰτιῶ παρόντα

Accuse someone when he is present, to his face

12

88 λέγε εἰδώς

Speak only from expertise

89 βίας μὴ ἔχου

Don't rely on brute force; don't be violent

90 ἀλύπως βίου

Gather your livelihood without causing pain

91 ὄμιλει πρᾶως

Associate with others in a gentle way

92 πέρας ἐπιτέλει μὴ ἀποδειλιῶν

Finish fully without timidness

93 φιλοφρόνει πᾶσιν

Be friendly/cheerful to all

94 υἱοῖς μὴ καταρῶ

Do not curse your sons; don't act in such a way that your actions doom your descendants

95 γυναικὸς ἀρχε

Show your wife the way / lead your wife (esp. re: her use of household resources)

13

96 σεαυτὸν εὖ ποίει

Treat yourself well

97 εὐπροσήγορος γίνου

Be well spoken and be spoken about well

98 ἀποκρίνου ἐν καιρῷ

Respond at the critical moment; don't make a snap judgement

99 πόνει μετ' εύκλειας

Labor / struggle in company with good repute / integrity

100 πρᾶττε ἀμετανοήτως

Act without afterthought / don't keep changing your mind / act without overthinking it

101 ἀμαρτάνων μετανόει

(Only) when you are failing of your purpose, change your mind (rethink it)

102 ὀφθαλμοῦ κράτει

14

Master the eye (what you look at; what attention you attract)

103 βουλεύον χρόνῳ

Give counsel after a time (deliberate for a while first)

104 πρᾶττε συντόμως

Act immediately / expeditiously

105 φιλίαν φύλαττε

Protect friendship

106 εὐγνώμων γίνου

Be reasonable; be prudent; be considerate

107 ὁμόνοιαν δίωκε

Pursue concord

108 ἀρρητον ορύπτε

Keep hidden that which ought not be spoken

109 τὸ κρατοῦν φοβοῦ

Fear power

15

110 τὸ συμφέρον θηρῶ

Hunt for what is (mutually) beneficial or expedient

111 καιρὸν προσδέχου

Wait for the right time

112 ἔχθρας διάλυε

Put an end to enmities, let them go

113 γῆρας προσδέχου

Accept / expect old age

114 ἐπὶ ρώμη μὴ καυχῶ

Don't boast about your physical strength

115 εὐφημίαν ἀσκει

Practice auspicious speech

116 ἀπέχθειαν φεῦγε

Flee hatred

117 πλούτει δικαιώς

Become wealthy in a way that is just

16

118 δόξαν μὴ λεῖπε

Don't walk away from a good reputation

119 κακίαν μίσει

Hate badness

120 κινδύνευε φρονίμως

Take a risk prudently

121 μανθάνων μὴ κάμνε

Don't suffer over learning

122 φειδόμενος μὴ λεῖπε

Don't leave off being sparing (of resources or human life)

123 χρησμοὺς θαύμαζε

Comply with / respect oracles

124 οὓς τρέφεις ἀγάπα

Love those whom you raise

125 ἀπόντι μὴ μάχου

Don't fight someone who is away / don't talk bad behind
someone's back

17

126 πρεσβύτερον αἰδοῦ

Show regard for an elder

127 νεώτερον διδασκε

Teach youngsters

128 πλούτῳ ἀπίστει

Don't put faith in wealth

129 σεαυτὸν αἰδοῦ

Respect yourself

130 μὴ ἄρχε υβριζειν

Don't be the leader in insolence

131 προγόνους στεφάνου

Honor forefathers (wreathe their memorials)

132 θνήσκε υπὲρ πατρίδος

Die in defense of your fatherland

133 τῷ βίῳ μὴ ἄχθου

Don't be vexed with your manner of living (or even with
the world)

18

134 ἐπὶ νεκρῷ μὴ γέλα

Do not laugh at a dead person (do not regard yourself as
superior to a dead person)

135 ἀτυχοῦντι συνάχθου

Be troubled for the man who is unfortunate (has failed or
died)

136 χαρίζου ἀβλαβῶς

Gratify (yourself and others) without harm

137 μὴ ἐπὶ παντὶ λυποῦ

Don't be distressed by everything

138 ἐξ εὐγενῶν γέννα

Beget from good lineage (recognize your spouse's family traits, reputation, wealth)

139 ἐπαγγέλου μηδενί

Make (public) promises to no one

140 φθιμένους μὴ ἀδίκει

Do not be unjust to the dead

19

141 εὖ πάσχε ως θνητός

Be in a good state of mind (about how you fare), as much as a mortal (can be)

142 τύχῃ μὴ πίστευε

Do not put faith in luck (good or bad)

143 παῖς ὃν κόσμιος ἴσθι

When you are a child, be an ornament (a credit) to your parents

144 ἡβῶν ἐγκρατής

When you are in your youth, (be) self-disciplined

145 μέσος δίκαιος

When you are in middle age, be just (civilized, righteous)

146 πρεσβύτης εὐλογος

When you are an elder, be reasonable (well-spoken)

147 τελευτῶν ἀλυπος

Upon reaching the end, be without sorrow